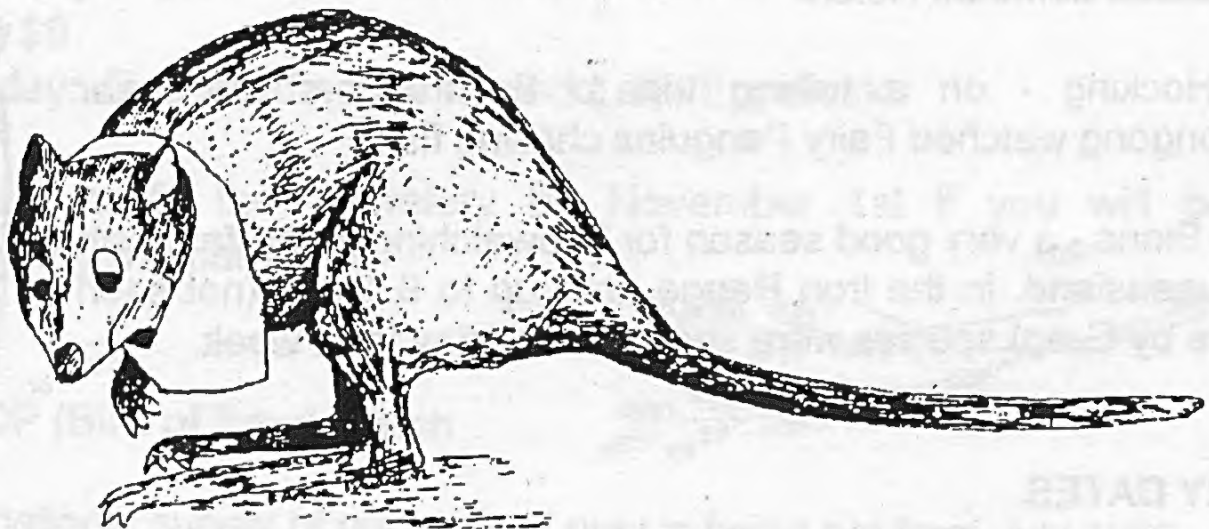


Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat *Incorporated*

SEPTEMBER 1996

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

- Meeting : Sep 6 Ms S Mitchell: Native Animal Rescue
Meeting : Oct 4 Dr G Ambrose: Frogwatch
Excursion : Sep 8 Grenville / Enfield: P & J Sedgewick
Excursion : Sep 22 Pyrites Ranges: P & W Murphy
Excursion : Oct 5 Wetland Frogs (Sat evening)
Dr G Ambrose
Excursion : Oct 20 Dalyenong: Maryborough FNC



President: Mr G Binns Ph:
Secretary: Mr L Fink
Treasurer: Ms S Davison
Editor: Mr A Dyson

Postal Address:
PO Box 328W, Ballarat West, 3350.

Meetings are held at the Art Building,
School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard
St South, commencing at 7.30 pm.

Excursions commence from the corner
of Sturt and Armstrong Sts., Ballarat, at
9.30 am for full-day excursions or at 1.30
pm for half-day excursions.

Field Reports

Alan Morrison - only a few birds (mainly seagulls) seen on visits to Winter Swamp.

Ken McDonnell - flowering at Invermay - Nodding Greenhoods, Tetrathica and Common Hovea. Golden Wattle flowering in abundance around Maryborough. At Tullaroop Reservoir a Pied Cormorant fishing in shallow water and a White-faced Heron throwing its catch (possibly minnows) onto the bank for later collection.

Lyndsay Fink - a small kestrel flying with a large mouse recently caught.

Carol Hall - walked the Nature Trail at Monkey Mia (Shark Bay) on a recent trip to WA (see pages 4 and 5). Two "local" birds seen were the Thick-billed Grasswren and the Chiming Wedgebill. The latter bird has a call with a haunting and monotonous descending chiming.

Frank Harrap - a large flock of up to 100 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos at Mount Helen.

Val Hocking - on a fishing trip to Bushrangers Bay near Wollongong watched Fairy Penguins chasing fish.

Greg Binns - a very good season for birdwatching in the far north of Queensland. In the Iron Range area up to 9 "new" (not seen before by Greg) species were spotted each day for a week.

DIARY DATES

21 - 22 September - ANG AIR Wildflower Show at the Anglesea Hall, McMillan St., 10 to 5.30 on the Saturday and 10 to 5 on the Sunday. Features local wildflower display, wildflower walks native plants and arts and crafts for sale and much more.

Sunday 22 September - excursion to Pyrites Range. A full day excursion from the normal 9.30am departure spot.

Tuesday 24 September 7.30pm - Committee Meeting at
(Greg Binns)



All club members and friends are invited to the Club Campout to be held at "Twin Rivers Camp" (Site 2 of Wesley Point Camp), Hazlett Avenue, Lake Eppalock.

There is bunk room style accommodation. Bring your own pillow, linen and blankets or sleeping bag. There is a kitchen, barbecue and dining area to allow us to cater for our meals. Bring your own food; Saturday and Sunday lunch will be away from the camp.

Cost: \$20 per person for the weekend. (half price - under school age)

How to get there: The camp is 36km from Bendigo. Turn off the Bendigo-Redesdale road on to Twin Rivers Road and then on to Hazlett Avenue. Map available later.

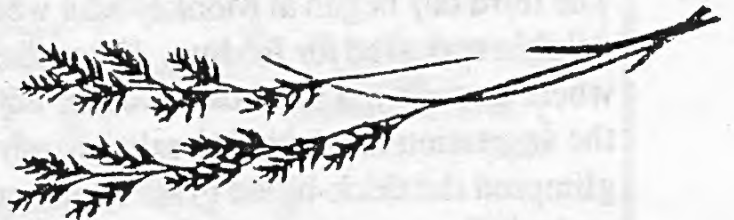
Program:

Saturday: Visit Heathcote Insectarium and tour of local areas. Cost \$9.

Sunday: Bushland areas around Lake Eppalock.

Please notify the Secretary by November 1st if you will be attending the campout.

BOP (Bird of Prey) Watch



A national survey of our birds of prey is being run from July 1996 to June 2000 to collect information to accurately assess the impact of the Rabbit Calicivirus Disease on our native birds of prey. BOP Watch needs the assistance of competent birders to carry out roadside counts, in all areas, during usual driving trips.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer observer please contact the project co-ordinator, William Steele, at the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, 415 Riversdale Road, East Hawthorn 3123. Phone - 03-98822622.

Greg Binns

Marine Wonders of Shark Bay

University of W.A. Extension Program June 27 - 30 1996

First offered in 1991, this 4-day educational tour of the Shark Bay region aims to give an insight into the marine ecology of this unique area together with related terrestrial environments. The area has enormous biodiversity, lying on the northern extremity of many species typical of the south, and the southern extremity of many northern species. It was declared a Marine Park in 1990 and gained World Heritage listing in 1991.

Having left Perth at 7am we arrived at Hamelin Pool about 4.30pm to see the stromatolites. A boardwalk with explanatory plaques was recently completed to protect these fragile microbial communities. After dinner at the motel in Denham, our base for 3 nights, the CALM ranger showed us a promotional video and gave a talk on park management.

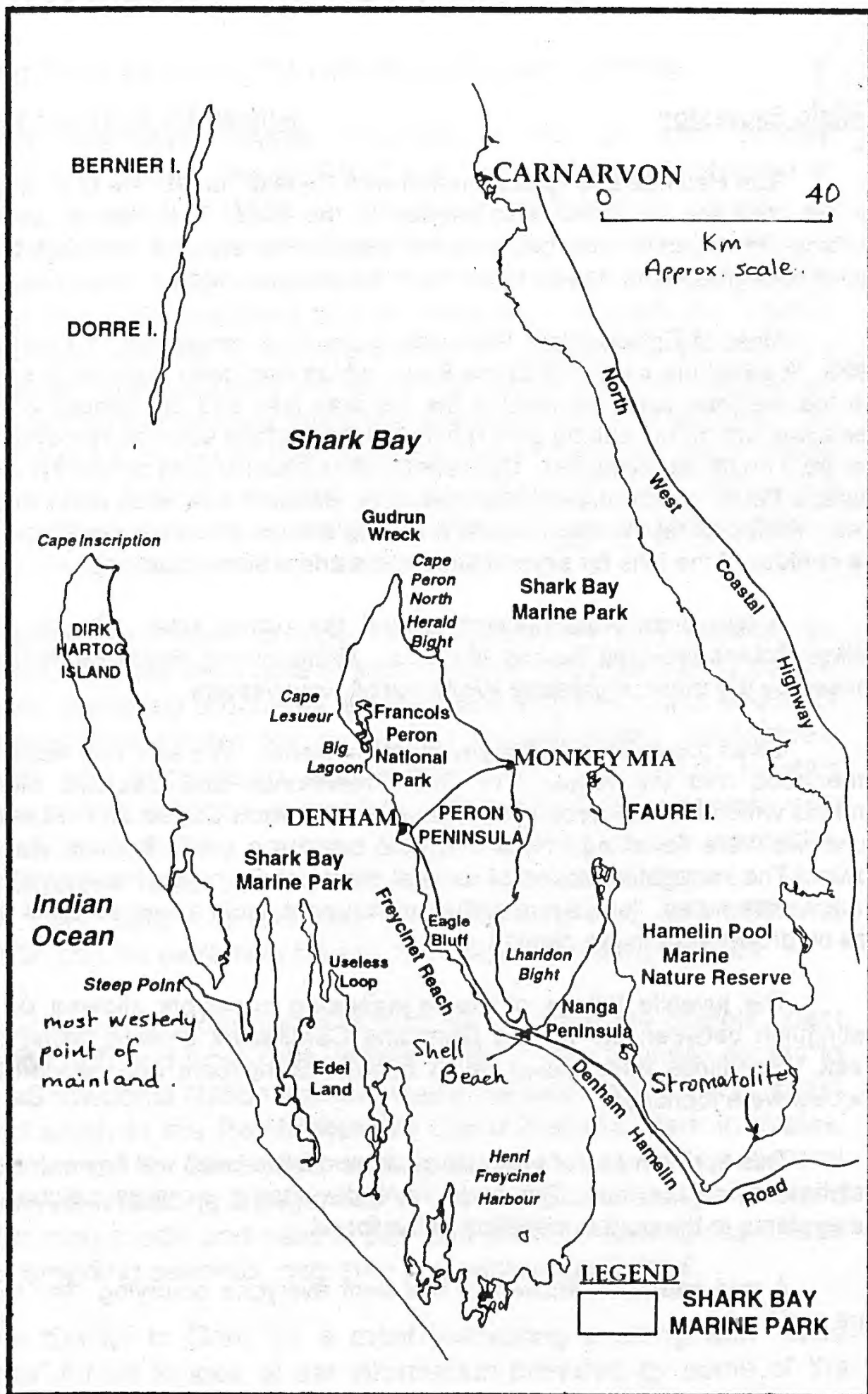
The following day was spent aboard a chartered boat; shoals of mackerel or albacore fed on the surface, dolphins rode the bow wave, a tiger shark and manta ray were seen - after some members of the group went snorkelling! The marine biologist accompanying us from the uni. brought up seafloor specimens of creatures and samples of the seagrasses on which the Bay's ecology depends. Turtles and dugong broke the water's surface, and ospreys, various terns, pelicans, Pacific and silver gulls were seen.

A short venture out to Steep Point, the most westerly point of Australia revealed huge seas breaking against 100m cliffs of limestone - small wonder there were so many shipwrecks along this coast in the days of sail.

The third day began at Monkey Mia where 3 adult females and a year-old baby dolphin appeared for feeding. We walked round the Monkey Mia Nature Trail where ancient red sand-dunes occur adjacent to white coastal sands, and all the vegetation is adapted to salty, windy conditions with little fresh water. We glimpsed the thick-billed grass wren, variegated wrens and heard the chiming wedgebill.

After lunch 4WD vehicles took us into François Péron Nat. Park where the ranger explained Project Eden - the elimination of vermin and the re-introduction of native mammals from relict populations on offshore islands. The final morning began with a visit to Shell Beach where tens of km. of a tiny bivalve *Fragum erugatum* have accumulated in extensive ridges up to 10m deep; in the past the older compacted layers were quarried for building materials. Then back to Perth - a 10 hour journey! It was an intensive 4 days, packed with information, interesting literature and the company of like-minded people.

C. HALL.



Enfield Excursion

Sunday 4th August, 1996

Ron Hall has a long association with Enfield Forest. He is a ranger for the area and his father also worked in the forest. He met at us the Surface Point picnic area but was not pleased to see the litter left by a motor bike group who has camped there the previous night.

Most of Enfield State Park was burnt by a severe fire in February 1995. A small area east of Surface Point, which had been burnt by a small fire the previous year, the heat of the fire was less and the canopy of the trees was not burnt. During gold mining all the surface soil was removed so that gold could be recovered. Until about 1950 a family lived on the hill near Surface Point. Unfortunately little historical research has been done in the area. Relics of the mining include a mining dam with a channel following the contour of the hills for several kilometres and a stone chimney.

A few birds were present around the picnic area. Scarlet and Yellow Robins provided flashes of colour. White-naped Honeyeaters were chased by the more aggressive White-eared Honeyeaters.

It was too early to find many plants in flower. We saw one Nodding Greenhood and the remains of Tiny Greenhoods and Bearded Midge Orchids which had flowered in the autumn. Common Correa and Scented Sundews were flowering. Near the radio beacon a small Boronia was in flower. The variegated leaves of several plants of Common Flat-pea along a track were noted. Is this due to the environment could a new strain of flat-pea be grown from these plants?

The juvenile foliage of the regenerating eucalypts allowed us to distinguish between the Manna Gum and Candlebark growing along the creek. Seedlings have grown up to 50cm. Stringybark and peppermint species were identified.

This spring many of the bush-peas and bitter-peas will flower for the first time since the fire. The buds were developing on large patches of these plants in the northern section of the forest.

A mid afternoon shower of hail sent everyone scurrying to their cars and home.

JG

BIRD RESERVES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM



Greg Binns spoke on this topic at our August meeting.

There are many nature reserves in the UK with various controlling bodies. The RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) founded in 1889 is the major organization, owning or managing 111 reserves. The Nature Conservancy Council, a Government body owns 180 reserves. The Cumbria Wildlife Trust has 4000 members and 40 reserves; in Norfolk the Norfolk Naturalist Institute is responsible for 40 properties. In 1899 the National Trust acquired the first of its nature reserves at Wicken Fen in Cambridgeshire. Here there are 600 acres of wetland - an undrained remnant of East Anglia's Great Fens with wide variety of habitats for birds of scrub, marsh, reeds and water. There are specialised societies as well as national and local organizations - such as the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge.

Greg praised these groups for the materials they provide for visitors and we were able to look at some of these during supper break. Excellent brochures are provided with maps and details of walking tracks; there are pamphlets, pocket books, magazines, cards and booklets to satisfy any visitor. The Youth Hostels Association produce pamphlets with maps linking hostels with good birdwatching areas. Many reserves have carparks, informative noticeboards, bird hides and Visitor Centres. Most are open daily - in fact they are well patronised and weekend traffic can be extremely heavy. An entry fee usually applies.

Greg showed slides taken during his trip from the Suffolk coast then north and west (after a visit to the Farne Islands) across to the Snowdonia National Park (where the rare Red Kite was seen) and south to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in Wales. Further on to Slimbridge and south and east visiting several reserves including Dungeness in Kent, a unique shingle foreland with man made and natural pits and ponds - an important area for breeding seabirds, migrants and wintering wildfowl.

Our thanks to Greg for a most interesting evening with "extra time" for us to look at the information provided by some of the UK bird organizations.

FUNGIMAP

Many people are asking how they can help with the project. The project is an Australia wide project to map the distribution and spread of specific identified fungi species.

We are starting out with 8 species in the pilot stage. When we receive funding the number will be increased to 100. Approximately 90% of the species are native and 10% exotic.

To help, all you need is the list of target species and to send in the following when you see one:

- A Photograph (if available)
- Species name.
- Locality.
- Grid Reference. Either latitude/longitude (to nearest minute is fine), or Australian Map Grid coordinates, or grid reference from MEL-WAY etc. Please ensure that full grid references are given.
- Observers name and address.
- Date observed.
- Habitat and associated tree species.

All administrative and general enquiries should be sent John Julian, c/- FNCV, Locked Bag 3, BLACKBURN 3130. John can be contacted on (03) 9830 4795 on Mondays between 10am and 2.00pm or on 0419 895 873 at other times.

All fungi records should be sent to the FUNGI MAP PROJECT, National Herbarium of Victoria, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, 3141.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS
CONTACT
STEPHANIE DAVISON

The eight target species are:

- *Amanita muscaria* (Fly Agaric)
- *Amanita xanthocephala* (Vermilion Amanita)
- *Aseroe rubra* (Anemone Fungus)
- *Battarraea stevenii* (Drumstick Fungus)
- *Dermocybe austroveneta* (Green Dermocybe) (= *Cortinarius austrovenetus*)
- *Mycena interrupta* (Pixies Parasol)
- *Omphalina chromacea* (Chrome Omphalina) (= *Omphalia chromacea*)
- *Omphalotus nidiformis* (Ghost Fungus) (= *Pleurotus nidiformis*)

A colour brochure of the target species and a kit on collecting and preserving fungi are available. Unfortunately we have to charge for these as the project has no funds of its own.

In addition to photographs, the brochure includes descriptions of the target species and what to record.

It is hoped that later in the year the target list will be expanded and, if funding is available, resource material will be provided to volunteer collectors free of charge.

TARGET SPECIES COLOUR BROCHURE

\$3.50 EACH
CONTACT JOHN JULIAN